

Cllr Liam Beckett

MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

Proposals for new 'unitary' councils to replace our county and district councils continue to be developed, and have been narrowed down to three options. All three divide Cambridgeshire & Peterborough into just two councils, as follows.

Option A

- East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough

Option B

- Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough

Option C

- Huntingdonshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Peterborough

The County Council will be supporting further work on Option A, while the leadership of Huntingdonshire District Council is supporting Option C. Option C is the only option which retains Huntingdonshire's links with Cambridge, where a huge proportion of Hunts residents work, study, obtain health care, and travel for leisure and entertainment. Options A and B would remove any democratic input by Hunts residents into decisions which have major impacts on their lives.

The existing Cambridgeshire & Peterborough councils must write to the Government by the end of November, with proposals for no more than three different options. Each council leader can support only one option. Final power rests with the Government, who may choose or amend any of the above proposals or even substitute them with a proposal of their own. The Government must consult on whatever it proposes.

Meanwhile, there is a survey—not a consultation—which closes on 20 July. I can't recommend highly enough that residents have their say and make their case for Huntingdonshire in this survey – this decision by government will have lasting effects on all of us so I can't stress how important it is to contribute to the survey.

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/LGRsurvey>

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Government steps in to take control of Fens reservoir plans

The Government has announced it is stepping in to take over delivery of nine reservoirs, including the Fens reservoir planned near Chatteris. The announcement indicates that this will 'accelerate' completion of the reservoir, though it gives no date, and it is not clear how much faster the Government could start water flowing than the currently advertised date of 2036.

Planning for a low carbon, resilient energy future

An informal engagement survey is seeking the views of Cambridgeshire residents on the future of renewable energy, net zero, and energy in our county. The county council is keen to hear from parish councils, local businesses or community groups. To get involved, visit the Local Area Energy Plan webpage:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/climate-change-energy-and-environment/climate-change-action/low-carbon-energy/local-area-energy-planning

Council recognised for climate leadership

Cambridgeshire County Council has been ranked as one of the top-performing councils in the country for the action it has taken towards Net Zero. The Council achieved a score of 55 per cent in the Climate Action Scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK, placing it second among all comparable local authorities in England. The score marks an improvement of 11 per cent from 2023, making Cambridgeshire County Council 'one of the most improved county councils', according to Climate Emergency UK. The Scorecard assesses more than 400 councils and combined authorities against a broad range of climate criteria, including transport, buildings and heating, biodiversity, planning, governance, waste, and community engagement.

Food waste volunteers

By mid-2026, all districts in Cambridgeshire will have changed the way they collect food waste from homes. Instead of being picked up every two weeks, food waste will be collected weekly, separate from garden waste. To help make the scheme a success, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) is looking for volunteers to talk to residents on their doorsteps about the changes and how they will be affected, to help people to think about how they can reduce food waste. Full training will be provided.

www.recap.co.uk/campaigns/food-waste-volunteers-needed-introducing-simpler-recycling

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Consultation on the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy is expected to open on 18 July. The document is detailed but very well put together and informative. I recommend using the interactive map as a starting place for deciding which areas in

the parish might be considered for biodiversity projects. Local grants open to this kind of project (currently taking applications) are detailed in the grants section below.

<https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/>

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

New ways of building schools

The council has agreed to enable academy schools to lead on construction of some expansion projects on their premises, and developers to lead on some new build schools. The council has also agreed a new service in Harston with residential placements for two children with complex needs.

HIGHWAYS

Local Highways Improvement Panel meets to score bids

The Hunts Local Highways Improvement Panel, consisting of five councillors, will meet/has met in July to assess, score and put forward their recommendations for successful LHI Bids.

Whilst I'm not allowed to directly influence the decision making process, please let me know if a bid has been submitted from our area so I can make sure I bring it up with my fellow councillors who may or may not be scoring these bids...

Public rights of way

Parish councils have been invited to help develop a public rights of way (PROW) hierarchy. The hierarchy will rank local rights of way by their importance to our communities. This includes gaining an understanding of routes that are important for utility journeys (such as accessing workplaces, schools or services) and for leisure and recreation.

A questionnaire has been sent to all parish councils for feedback on the rights of way used in our local areas. Parish councils are invited to contact local walking or cycling groups, or other local rights of way users, for their input. The questionnaire will close on Thursday 31 July.

Guided Busway safety

By historical accident, the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is regulated by the Health & Safety Executive, rather than as a typical highway or a typical railway. Following the recent prosecution relating to three tragic deaths between 2015 and 2021, the council has agreed to fence its entire length, and remediate flooding at three key points.

A14

There is unanimous agreement across the council about the unsatisfactory performance of National Highways in its improvement programme on the A14. The project left a very large number of unresolved issues in its wake, and the council is continuing to engage with National Highways to seek resolutions to these. I have appeared on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to start campaigning for National Highways to step up their remediation work.

Highways satisfaction survey

At least 3,300 Cambridgeshire residents are being asked for their views on the County Council's highways and transport services in the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey. In this annual survey they will have the opportunity to comment on everything from the condition of roads and footpaths to public transport and the quality of cycling facilities.

A questionnaire is being sent to a random sample of residents, followed by a reminder. Those who receive a copy are being encouraged to take part. They can do so either by post or online. Local and national results will be published in late-October 2025, and the council will use the feedback to manage and improve local services.

ESTABLISHING RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF LAND

Over the past few months it's become clear to me there are numerous sections of land within each parish that are ambiguous when it comes to knowing which authority is responsible for its maintenance.

I'm therefore launching a year-long project with the aim of getting written confirmation from either the private individuals, the parish, district or county councils as to the ownership of the land and the extent of each organisations committed responsibility to maintenance. The aim is to remove the ambiguity and ensure we all know who to contact when routine maintenance has not worked/happened.

I am collecting, collating the sites, and building a map of locations. If you have an area or areas within your parish that are somewhat 'unclaimed', please send me a What/where/words location and a description of the maintenance tasks that have been difficult to get completed.

I will periodically update you on my progress.

LOCAL GRANTS – CURRENTLY OPEN TO APPLICATIONS

A428 Community Fund

Grants of up to £15,000 are available for projects in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire that support local economy, skills and employment; support and connect communities and/or enhance the environment.

Applications open between now and 1st August

Thalia WB Community Fund

The Thalia WB (formerly Amey) Community Fund is part of the national Landfill Communities Fund scheme. The fund offers grants for capital projects to improve the local environment, including public buildings and amenities, habitats and architecture. Grants between £10,000 and £50,000.

Apply by 1 September for projects starting December

Apply by 1 December for projects starting March

Meet your Councillor

Brampton Co-Op (High Street) – 5th July 10:30-11:30

I can also be contacted...

- By email liam.beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- By phone 07312 081892

Cllr Liam Beckett

County Councillor for the Brampton and Buckden Division